

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY PM/DCA:RAMARTIN

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APPROVED BY EUR:WJSTOESSEL, JR.

PM/DCA: MR. BAKER

S/AJ: MR. MENDELSON (SUBSTANCE)

OSD/ISA: COL. GRANGER

ACDA: MR. GRAYBEAL

S/S-O:KKURZE

EUR/RPM: MR. MCGUIRE

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION NATO

S E C R E T STATE 168401

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS - 12/31/81

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: SOVIET MIRV TESTING

REF: USNATO 3858

1. MISSION WILL HAVE RECEIVED IN AUGUST 20 WIRELESS FILE HIGHLIGHTS AND EXCERPTS FROM SECDEF SCHLESINGER'S AUGUST 7 PRESS CONFERENCE, WHICH, INTER ALIA, COVERED SOVIET MIRV TESTING. INCLUDED BELOW ARE TWO QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON SAME SUBJECT FROM SECRETARY ROGERS AUGUST 20 PRESS CONFERENCE. MISSION MAY DRAW AS APPROPRIATE ON THESE MATERIALS IN HANDLING QUESTIONS.

2. TEXT OF SECRETARY ROGERS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS IS AS FOLLOWS: BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED.

QUESTION: MR. SECRETARY, ON AMERICAN RELATIONS WITH THE SECRET

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SOVIET UNION, THERE'S BEEN A RATHER OBVIOUS IMPROVEMENT IN

RELATIONS LATELY. IN YOUR OPINION, DOES THE FACT, THAT THE SOVIET UNION NOW HAS FLIGHT-TESTED A MIRV -- IS THERE ANY REASON TO DOUBT THAT THE SOVIET UNION, BECAUSE OF MIRV, MIGHT NOW BE SEEKING TO GAIN A STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE OVER THE UNITED STATES IN NUCLEAR WEAPONS?

SECRETARY ROGERS: I THINK IT'S A LITTLE EARLY TO JUDGE ON THAT. THE FACT THAT THE SOVIET UNION PROCEEDED WITH A PROGRAM OF MIRV-ING, FLIGHT-TESTING -- AND, WE EXPECT, SUBSEQUENT DEPLOYMENT OF MIRV'S -- IS NOT UNEXPECTED. WE EXPECTED THAT. WE TALKED ABOUT IT WHEN WE TESTIFIED BEFORE THE CONGRESS ON THE INTERIM AGREEMENT. AND, CERTAINLY, IT'S NOT PROHIBITED BY THE AGREEMENT.

I THINK THAT BOTH THE SOVIET UNION AND THE UNITED STATES ARE GOING TO PROCEED -- WE HOPE -- TO COMPLY WITH THE AGREEMENT; WE HAVE NO REASON TO COMPLAIN ABOUT THAT, WE THINK. WE EXPECT THAT THEY WILL PROCEED TO MODERNIZE THEIR NUCLEAR CAPABILITY AND WE'RE GOING TO PROCEED TO MODERNIZE OURS.

IN OTHER WORDS, THESE THINGS ARE NOT VIOLATIONS OF EITHER THE ABM TREATY OR THE INTERIM AGREEMENT.

IT DOES MAKE IT QUITE EVIDENT THOUGH, THAT THERE IS A GREATER URGENCY THAT'S GOING TO EXIST IN THE SECOND PHASE OF THE SALT TALKS TO DO EVERYTHING WE REASONABLY CAN ON BOTH SIDES TO REACH AN AGREEMENT WHICH WILL HAVE NOT ONLY QUANTITATIVE LIMITATIONS BUT QUALITATIVE LIMITATIONS. AND WE HOPE THAT THE AGREEMENT THAT WAS REACHED AND EXPRESSED IN THE COMMUNIQUE WHEN GENERAL SECRETARY BREZHNEV WAS HERE CAN BE COMPLIED WITH.

QUESTION: MR. SECRETARY, YOU SPEAK OF "GREATER URGENCY."

AT THE SAME TIME, AREN'T THERE LESSER OPPORTUNITIES FOR AGREEMENT, NOW THAT BOTH SIDES HAVE TESTED MIRV'S?

SECRETARY ROGERS: OH, I THINK THAT THE FACT THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS SUCCESSFULLY TESTED MIRV'S HAS SOMEWHAT REDUCED THE PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESSFUL QUALITATIVE RESTRICTIONS -- AN AGREEMENT THAT INCLUDES QUALITATIVE RESTRICTIONS ON MIRV'S -- YES. IT DOESN'T RULE IT OUT COMPLETELY BUT IT MAKES IT DIFFICULT, BECAUSE THE VERIFICATION OF THE TESTING WAS A VERY SATISFACTORY WAY TO FIND OUT WHETHER PROGRESS IS BEING MADE IN THE MIRV PROGRAM OR

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NOT. ONCE A NATION HAS THE ABILITY TO MIRV, IT'S MORE DIFFICULT TO VERIFY BY NATIONAL MEANS WHETHER THE DEPLOYMENT IS TAKING PLACE AND THE EFFECT OF THE DEPLOYMENT, IF YOU WILL.

END UNCLASSIFIED.

3. AS YOU REQUESTED TEXT OF AUGUST 15 ALSOP COLUMN, WHICH

CONTAINS MANY INACCURACIES, BEING SENT SEPTEL.

4. TO EXTENT THAT POSSIBLE QUERIES ON THIS SUBJECT,
INCLUDING FROM PRESS, REQUIRE ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE, MISSION
SHOULD CONTINUE TO USE NORMAL TELEGRAPHIC CHANNELS TO
TRANSMIT THEM TO WASHINGTON WHERE USUAL PROCEDURES WILL BE
FOLLOWED TO ENSURE APPROPRIATELY COORDINATED RESPONSE--
AS WAS DONE IN THIS CASE. RUSH

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